

**Statement on Senate Action on
Departments of Veterans Affairs and
Housing and Urban Development,
and Independent Agencies
Appropriations Legislation**

October 12, 2000

I am pleased that the Senate has passed a VA/HUD bill that will open the doors of opportunity in America for those who need it most, build on our agenda for national energy security, and strengthen our commitment to the environment. With this legislation—which includes key provisions negotiated by my budget team—we take an important step toward addressing critical national priorities and opening the doors of opportunity for many more Americans.

This legislation builds upon my opportunity agenda with increased funding for economic development through empowerment zones and enterprise communities and community development financial institutions, all part of my new markets initiative, and with 79,000 new housing vouchers for low income families. This agreement also increases support for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's emergency food and shelter programs which work with States and communities to help the homeless and hungry. We are also strengthening our commitment to national service with additional support for the Corporation for National and Community Service, the first increase since the inception of this critical volunteer agency in 1993.

With this legislation, we support the significant expansion of cutting-edge basic scientific research at the National Science Foundation. This includes research in nanotechnology—the manipulation of matter at the molecular and atomic level—which holds the promise of scientific breakthroughs in a wide range of fields. It also advances scientific research through support for space exploration at NASA. At especially at this time of elevated fuel prices, I am also pleased that this bill provides resources for technologies to increase fuel efficiency, an essential part of our long-term strategy to reduce dependence on oil.

This agreement also contains increased funding for enforcement of the Nation's en-

vironmental laws and for the cleanup of polluted waterways. The agreement we reached drops or fixes several objectionable riders that threatened to harm our environment. Yet, while we were able to ameliorate the impact of the remaining riders, we were not able to rid this bill entirely of objectionable provisions, in particular the rider relating to ozone.

This agreement also provides the additional \$1.5 billion I requested for the Department of Veterans Affairs, the largest increase ever requested by any administration. This funding will support efforts to improve veterans' medical care and the delivery of key services, including disability benefits.

This agreement is clear proof of the progress we can achieve when we work together to address the Nation's priorities.

**Proclamation 7362—Death of
American Servicemembers Aboard
the United States Ship COLE**

October 12, 2000

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

As a mark of respect for those who died on the United States Ship COLE, I hereby order, by the authority vested in me as President of the United States by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, that the flag of the United States shall be flown at half-staff upon all public buildings and grounds, at all military posts and naval stations, and on all naval vessels of the Federal Government in the District of Columbia and throughout the United States and its Territories and possessions until sunset, Monday, October 16, 2000. I also direct that the flag shall be flown at half-staff for the same length of time at all United States embassies, legations, consular offices, and other facilities abroad, including all military facilities and naval vessels and stations.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twelfth day of October, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the